

## CHAPTER VIII

### CANNIBALISM

Cannibalism. — Origin in food supply. — Cannibalism not abominable. — In-group cannibalism. — Population policy. — Judicial cannibalism. — Judicial cannibalism in ethnography. — Out-group cannibalism. — Cannibalism to cure disease. — Reversions to cannibalism. — Cannibalism in famine. — Cannibalism and ghost fear. — Cannibalism in sorcery and human sacrifice. — Cult and cannibalism. — Superstitions about cannibalism. — Food taboos in ethnography. — Expiation for taking life. — Philosophy of cannibalism.

338. Cannibalism. Cannibalism is one of the primordial mores. It dates from the earliest known existence of man on earth. It may reasonably be believed to be a custom which all peoples have practiced.<sup>1</sup> Only on the pastoral stage has it ceased, where the flesh of beasts was common and abundant.<sup>2</sup> It is indeed noticeable that the pygmies of Africa and the Kubus of Sumatra, two of the lowest outcast races, do not practice cannibalism,<sup>8</sup> although their superior neighbors do. Our intense abomination for cannibalism is a food taboo (sees. 353-354), and is perhaps the strongest taboo which we have inherited.

339. Origin in food supply. It is the best opinion that cannibalism originated in the defects of the food supply, more specifically in the lack of meat food. The often repeated objection that New Zealanders and others have practiced cannibalism when they had an abundant supply of meat food is not to the point. The passion for meat food, especially among people who have to live on heavy starch food, is very strong. Hence they eat worms, insects, and offal. It is also asserted that the appetite for human flesh, when eating it has become habitual, becomes a

<sup>1</sup> See Andree, *Anthropophagie*; Steinmetz, *Endokannibalismi Mitt. Anthropol.*  
*Ges. in Wien*, XXVI; Schaffhausen in *Archiv für Anthrop.*, IV, 245. Steinmetz

gives in tabular form known cases of cannibalism with the motives for it, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Lippert, *Kulturgesch.* ^ II, 275.

<sup>3</sup> Globus, XXVI, 45; Stuhlmann, *Mit Emin Pascha*, 457 ; JAI, XXVIII, 39.